

NUTRITION

Nutrition and the Health of Young People

Diet & Disease Quick Facts:

1. Overweight and obesity, influenced by poor diet and inactivity, are significantly associated with an increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, joint problems, and poor health status.
2. Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as adult onset diabetes, has become increasingly prevalent among children and adolescents as rates of overweight and obesity rise. A CDC study estimated that one in three American children born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime.
3. Overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become overweight or obese adults; one study showed that children who became overweight by age 8 were more severely obese as adults.
4. Early indicators of atherosclerosis, the most common cause of heart disease, begin as early as childhood and adolescence. Atherosclerosis is related to high blood cholesterol levels, which are associated with poor dietary habits.
5. Osteoporosis, a disease where bones become fragile and can break easily, is associated with inadequate intake of calcium.
6. The prevalence of overweight among children aged 6-11 years has more than doubled in the past 20 years and among adolescents aged 12-19 has more than tripled.
7. Eighty percent of high school students do not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day.
8. Only 39% of children ages 2-17 meet the USDA's dietary recommendation for fiber (found primarily in dried beans and peas, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains).
9. Eighty-five percent of adolescent females do not consume enough calcium. During the last 25 years, consumption of milk, the largest source of calcium, has decreased 36% among adolescent females. Additionally, from 1978 to 1998, average daily soft drink consumption almost doubled among adolescent females, increasing from 6 ounces to 11 ounces, and almost tripled among adolescent males, from 7 ounces to 19 ounces.

Content source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School Health

